

Agenda

1. Introductions and Apologies

County Councillor Clarke

To note who is attending and any apologies for absence.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 24 November 2021 (Pages 1 - 10)

County Councillor Clarke

To agree for accuracy the notes of the meeting and receive any matters arising.

3. Lasting Homes Panel (20 mins) (Pages 11 - 34)

Janice Laing, Permanence Service and Tonya Harrison, Children in Care and Leaving Care Service, LCC

To receive an update on the new Lasting Homes Panel which has replaced the Permanence Panel.

4. Participation Team Update (15 mins)

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council), April Rankin and Adam Riley, Participation Team, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC

To receive an update on what the Participation Team have been doing with LINX since the last meeting.

5. Update from the Four Corporate Parenting Board Priority Groups (10 mins)

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, LCC

To receive a progress update from the four Corporate Parenting Board Priority Groups since the last Board meeting.

6. Life Story Work (45 mins) (Pages 35 - 54)

Janice Laing, Permanence Service, LCC

To discuss a refresh of Life Story work.

7. Any Other Business

County Councillor Clarke

To receive any other business.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

County Councillor Clarke

Tuesday, 15 March 2022 at 6pm, format to be confirmed.

Agenda Item 2

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th November, 2021 at 6.00pm in Zoom Virtual Meeting

Present: Members

County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jeff Couperthwaite	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Andrea Kay	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Scott Smith	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Graham Lindley	- Fostering Forum
Mary	- LINX Representative
Georgia	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Julie Dawkins	- Fostering Providers
Andreas Feldhaar	- Permanence Service, LCC
Janice Laing	- Permanence Service, LCC
Moya McKinney	- Permanence Service - Leaving Care, LCC
Paul McIntyre	- Fostering, Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool and Residential Services, LCC
Catherine Brooks	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Neil Drummond	- Lancashire Constabulary PPU
Brian Wood	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Adam Riley	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
April Rankin	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
Rebecca McGeown	- Lancs 0-19, Virgin Care Ltd
Caroline Waldron	- East Lancashire CCG
Maureen Huddleston	- Enhanced CLA Health Teams, UHMB

Other Attendees

Barbara Bath	- Children's Social Care, LCC
Brendan Lee	- Permanence Service, LCC

Amanda Barbour
Sam Gorton

- Leaving Care Service, LCC
- Democratic Services, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Bev Williams, Liz Donnelly-Nelson, Lynsey Evans, Stephen Young, Audrey Swann, Dr Nicola Bamford, Gina Power, Jo Swords and Kirsty Clarke.

Caroline Waldron was attending on behalf of Kirsty Byrne and Helen Hargreaves, Clinical Commissioning Groups.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 21 September 2021

Resolved: That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising from them.

3. Participation Team Update

Mary and Georgia from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council), April Rankin and Adam Riley, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council provided the Board with a revised presentation which can be found attached to the minutes and provided further insight on Participation including:

- What is Participation?
- What are the aims?
- Meet the Staff Team
- Lancashire Youth Council
- What has Lancashire Youth Council been up to?
- POWAR Send Forum
- What has POWAR been up to?
- LINX Children in Care Council (CICC) and Care Leaver Forum (CLF)
- What has CICC and CLF been up to?
- Working alongside
- Upskilling to teach additional skills
- Locations

An update was received on what LINX (Children in Care Council) (CICC) and the Care Leaver Forum (CLF) had been doing from July 2021 to the present, which included online sessions which had now moved to a hybrid model as well as face to face, to better facilitate the needs of young people. To date there had been 191 engagements with 50 unique young people. The sessions included the summer events and care leaver week activities which were a huge success with 21 care experienced young people attending the summer involvement Zoom sessions and 28 care experienced young people attending the summer involvement activity day sessions. The age range of the young people that attended were between 8 and 25. Care leavers week also saw 55 engagements of whom 23 were unique young people to the Service.

It was noted that the young people have been committed to their role in these groups and have been taking part in extra meetings and sessions such as interview panels for social workers, facilitating interviews for the youth policy strategic lead role and are currently working with Children's Social Care managers to interview senior social workers where the young people's marks are equal to the managers.

An important aspect of the Children in Care Council (CICC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF) is to ensure that Lancashire's looked after children and care leavers, are making changes which helps other children and young people. There are opportunities to attend meetings and work with other children looked after forums across the North West, as well as working with local groups, Social Workers, Targeted Youth Support Workers, Personal Advisors, Managers and Heads of Service.

One of the ways in which young people can make change is through Young Inspectors, and a training day was recently delivered for all members to become young inspectors who will then inspect services for cared for children and young people. Other young people from Lancashire's wider participation groups also attended the training, to plan for visits to SEN schools, and Child and Family Wellbeing provisions.

Members on the groups have also taken part in consultations where the feedback received is imperative. This included the Family Safeguarding booklet, fostering and adoption, what's it like to be supported by Children's Social Care and the summer involvement and recruitment event with the aim being to share the outcomes and reports with the young people.

Presentations have also been given to locality managers and team meetings to share the Participation Offer and there had been attendance at the Key Stage 4 Children Looked After Conference to share opportunities for children looked after across Lancashire, with the help from young people, who have also delivered a presentation to the Social Work Academy on what is and why participation is important.

The Board also noted that one of the roles as workers in the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum is to support young people to attend the Corporate Parenting Board and other meetings, so they can see what change and discussions are being had to make positive changes.

The group recently met Brendan Lee, Head of Service, Children Looked After and Leaving Care, Lancashire County Council and Councillor Stephen Clarke, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, to talk about various topics which are important to the group, which included mental health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), accommodation and social worker changes. Work is also ongoing to support young people to attend meetings as it is important for them to speak up, however at the moment that is a big step for some of the young people and work on this will continue.

There has also been involvement with the BBC who have offered workshops for young people with topics such as fake news and how to film a short story on a mobile phone. The BBC also talked to the young people on apprenticeships and job roles that they had coming up and how Lancashire's care leavers could apply for them.

During Care Leavers Week, young people talked to elected members about their lived experiences and current issues and the Participation groups have also had the opportunity to meet with The High Sheriff of Lancashire and County Councillor Cosima Towneley, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lancashire County Council to discuss support, campaigns and current topics.

Members were also shown a short video from Georgia, young person, on her positive outcomes, life experiences and achievements and how participation has helped with this.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions raised which included:

Whether feedback from consultations would be given back to young people and it was confirmed that this would be shared with them and the impact that their feedback had made, along with explaining that change cannot always be seen overnight and ensuring they are updated during the process.

There was a request as to what the next steps were for the Participation Service and whether there was a difference that had been seen following the service being brought back in-house. The Board were informed that prior to Christmas an evaluation would take place on what has been done well, and where improvements could be made. It was also noted that it had been good to see new young people attending the groups and that participation in the summer activities and care leavers week had been really positive.

A driver for participation was that young people could meet new young people in similar and different situations and seeing a difference to change being made.

The Board thanked everybody for their update and congratulated all involved for the difference that had been made since taking over the Participation contract.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update.

4. The Rossendale Dental Pilot

Amanda Barbour, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council and Caroline Waldron Safeguarding and Looked After Children, East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) gave an update on the Rossendale Dental Pilot which commenced on 20 September 2021 and came about from an approach that was made by a Dental Practice within Rossendale raising concerns that not many children had returned for dental checks after the Covid pandemic. An

opportunity was identified for some collaboration between Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Children's Social Care and Dental Practices. It is a six month pilot, and an evaluation will commence in January 2022 as a mid-point. The pilot follows on from a report that had previously been presented to the Board where they were informed that Dental assessment data was at its lowest. Since that report, it was confirmed that the dental assessment data had significantly improved, particularly since the pilot had commenced.

The presentation attached to the minutes provided an overview on:

The beginnings – how the pilot came about

Some interesting facts about dentists

What are the aims and objectives of the pilot?

How the pilot will meet these aims and objectives

Where is the pilot happening? Who with? When?

Next steps

A full bespoke training package has been produced by the Enhanced Child Looked After Team and this has been delivered to the Dentists and young people have been involved in that and there has been lots of social media communications around what children/young people think needs to be delivered in terms of training to Dentists, ie what they think Dentists need to know. There is also an option for Dentists to provide a virtual tour which will help those young people, particularly those with anxiety around attending in an attempt to break down some of the barriers and is a key element in the pilot scheme.

It is hoped that following the six month pilot scheme in Rossendale, it will be rolled out across Lancashire and South Cumbria and in order to do that a Post Graduate Dental Research student from UCLAN and NHSE/I has been enlisted and will formally evaluate the pilot. Feedback will be requested from children and young people and a number of ways to gather the information has been devised. This will be formalised in a formal review after six months of the pilot and any improvements required will be addressed prior to rolling this out across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Following the presentation, it was queried as to whether there was quantitative as well as qualitative outcomes that were being looked at in the six month timeframe. It was noted that it would be quantifiably measured by the performance that will be monitored on a weekly basis in terms of the uptake of Dental Health Assessments for all children, however a bespoke dashboard has been developed just for the purpose of the Rossendale Dental Pilot. Current figures showed that there had been a slight increase since starting in September 2021. In the Rossendale footprint in August 2021 – 55.9% of children had an up to date dental check in the last 12 months and as of November 2021 there has been an increase to 61.3%. In comparison to the overarching children looked after population across the Lancashire footprint in August 2021 52% of all children had an up to date dental assessment and in November 2021 59.2% had an up to date assessment.

The Board also noted that access to emergency dental provision is done via the normal route, either by themselves or support from their social worker, their carer or Personal Advisor, by contacting the Dentist whom they are known to. Currently it is only NHS Dentists that are involved in the pilot and that is due to funding from the NHS England who commission the NHS dental provision. In terms of information sharing and governance processes, this is something that has been explored as part of the pilot and information guidance has been sought in relation to data sharing if children/young people are moved around. Solutions have been identified on how information can be shared effectively on young people in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

In terms of the evaluation, it was confirmed that the Dentists themselves would be part of the evaluation and also after training, evaluation was requested from the Dental practices.

Early data shows that 10-15 year olds as well as those children who are placed with parents are less likely to visit the Dentist and make up around 20% of children who do not attend a Dentist, and this will help inform the second part of the roll out of the scheme and whether there needs to be more focused and targeted work with specific cohorts of children.

The Corporate Parenting Board were asked to acknowledge that two schemes have been run in the last year, one was in relation to initial health assessments which were really poor, and current figures are around 90% of children looked after have an up to date health assessment and the second is the dental assessments which were around 12% last year and are currently at 59.2% and in working collaboratively with a number of agencies, improvements are being seen.

- Resolved:**
- i) That the Board noted the update and congratulated everyone who was involved with the pilot scheme.
 - ii) That Sam Gorton, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council on behalf of the Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, write a letter of thanks to all the Dental Practices in the Rossendale area for their engagement with the project.

5. Child and Family Wellbeing Service Summer Programme 2021

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council, Brian Wood, April Rankin and Adam Riley, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council provided an update to the Board on the Summer Involvement Report 2021 which was attached to the agenda and can be found [here](#).

The report contained further details and Mary and Georgia, LINX (Children in Care Council) representatives, who attended the sessions, provided an update to the Board:

- Summary
- Uptake and planning
- Zoom sessions

- Borwick Hall Outdoor session
- Hothersall Lodge Outdoor session
- Anderton Centre Outdoor session
- Impact and staff feedback

A short video from young people was presented to the Board on the summer activities and it was proposed that these would be shared on social media.

After the event, it was noted that it had impacted each young person differently and that they had taken away something different from their time during the activities. Some young people stated that they would like to get involved in more outdoor activity type sessions and some expressed an interest in the youth offer and this has resulted in an increase of children and young people attending the Children in Care Council (CICC) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF). Positive feedback had also been received from carers.

Feedback from young people and staff will now be evaluated in preparation for the events for Summer 2022.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update.

6. How Do We Want to Make a Difference to Our Children and Young People

Brendan Lee, Children in Care and Care Leavers, and Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council outlined to the Board that various meetings had taken place prior to the Board with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board along with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Board's Lead Officer and the Director of Children's Services on the four priorities that Board will be involved in going forwards.

The Board was asked to launch a piece of work for all care leavers (16-25 years of age) to have a taster day/week at work, across the board from 1 April 2022. Planning for this will need to commence as soon as possible and will be a pilot for Lancashire and regular updates need to be provided for the Board and will require a Lead Officer to co-ordinate this with the support of members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The corporate parenting principles and its role and responsibility to support young people in care and care leavers, were again reiterated and the Board were reminded of the four partnership priorities. Following discussions it was agreed that the Champion leads for each priority area were as follows:

- i) Achieving permanence - County Councillor Stephen Clarke
- ii) Improving sufficiency, providing the right homes at the right place at the right time - County Councillors Julie Gibson and Andrea Kay
- iii) Improving physical, social emotional and mental health support and outcomes - County Councillors Rupert Swarbrick and Ash Sutcliffe

- iv) Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes -
County Councillors Jeff Couperthwaite and Scott Smith

It was suggested that consultation events with wider partners, where young people can hold them to account would also be a good opportunity in progressing the key priorities.

The Board were also informed that NHS England are currently piloting schemes in acute hospitals to provide care leaver work provision in three locations, Salford, Liverpool and Blackpool and the plan is to roll this out wider which will include Lancashire hospitals and will offer young people an opportunity to work and seek employment in the NHS.

Resolved: That Brendan Lee and Andreas Feldhaar will contact the leads for each priority to commence work and will set up virtual meetings to outline what is required from Elected Members.

7. Update on Lancashire's Care Leavers Week

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council), Brian Wood, Child and Family Wellbeing Service and Moya McKinney, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council provided the Board with an update on the Care Leavers week that had been held in November 2021 which provided lots of opportunities for care leavers to join in various events. There was some disappointment in terms of the numbers of young people who attended the events which was due to a number of reasons, ie planning and due to restrictions of Covid and timescales. There was an introductory event with Councillors and Senior Officers where young people shared their stories and journeys. There were also a number of craft and cooking events and a walking event with staff and young people which was hugely successful and has been arranged again and took place today. The week ended with a celebration event for a number of achievements for care leavers. The Board also noted that staff in the Service felt that they had made very strong connections with young people who wanted to come to the events, however, were unable to for a number of reasons, however contact has continued with those young people and it was hoped that they would join the groups (LINX and POWAR) and would be supported and encouraged by the Permanence and Child and Family Wellbeing Services to play an active part in the groups in enabling them to have their voice heard.

A questionnaire has been extended to all care leavers asking them what kind of activities they might want to be organised on a regular basis for a range of topics, ie football, netball, dance.

The Board were informed that there were plans to have a number of these events going forwards, and that it was not just limited to Care Leaver Week and there will also be recruitment days throughout the year too as well as the Summer Activity Days where preparation has already commenced.

April Rankin, Child and Family Wellbeing Service and Georgia and Mary (LINX) presented a video and an overview of their experience from Care Leavers Week and what they had been involved with and how they felt that it had made a difference to their confidence and also getting to meet new people.

A big thank you was expressed to Georgia and Mary who had given up their time to prepare the presentations and deliver them to the Board.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update and were encouraged with the continued work that was happening with care leavers and opportunities to get them involved more.

8. Timetable of Meetings 2022/2023

Resolved: That the Board noted the timetable of meetings for 2022/2023.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business received.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 13 January 2022 at 6pm, format to be agreed.

LANCASHIRE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

LASTING HOME PANEL PROTOCOL

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to set out the key expectations and principles around the function and purpose of the new Lasting Home panel which replaces the Permanence Panel from January 2021 as the process for ratifying a child's home as permanent.

This document is intended as a guide for social workers and managers. It will help define the pathways for inclusion of our children and young people and their carers' in our children's permanence process and make clear the decision-making points and roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

Role of Lasting Home Panel

The function of the Lasting Home Panel is to secure children's permanence within their home. The core framework which underpins the function of the Lasting Home Panel is the Permanence Policy.

The purpose of the Lasting Home Panel is to ratify children's homes as their permanent home.

Clear outcomes and financial agreement for a planned celebration event will be given by panel.

The process of ratifying children's homes as permanent is separate to decision making around 'plans *for* permanence' and 'plans *of* permanence'. These processes are detailed separately within the Permanence Policy.

Scope of Panel

Lasting Home Panels will deal with ratification of long-term foster homes, upon appropriate management oversight and matching meeting recommendations.

In some situations, it may be appropriate to consider the long-term match of a connected carer for a child. A core value of Lancashire Permanence Service remains that legal permanence via the most appropriate private court order should be the preferred permanence outcome for our children who are looked after by family members, however we recognise that this is not achievable for some families.

In other situations, it may be appropriate to consider the long-term match of a young person to their residential home. A further core value of Lancashire Permanence Service is that if we cannot support children and young people to stay within their own families, we would seek to care for them in foster homes as a preference to residential accommodation. We do however appreciate that for a very small minority of our children, residential accommodation is the most suitable home. This is particularly the case for our children with complex disabilities.

The permanence ratification of children with connected carers and residential provisions should be considered the exception and not the norm (excluding children with disabilities).

For children who are looked after through short breaks provision, their home with their parents will be their Lasting Home, unless it is assessed to be in their best interests to ratify their short break provision as a Lasting Home for them.

Lasting Home Panels will not deal with permanence planning and should not seek to replace this for children and young people.

NB: See Permanence Policy for details of other processes for permanence planning.

The difference between Permanence Panel and the new Lasting Home Panel

Our children and young people are the focus of their lasting home journey; this must be meaningful to them, supporting inclusion in decision making and promoting participation fully.

We recognise that our children are all individual and unique. As such, their journey to secure permanence will be just as individual and unique. Some of our children will want to participate fully and actively, others will not. We will respect our children's developmental needs, views and wishes, and support them in their journey to securing permanence in the way that is right for them.

Responding to our children

Our children have said that they have not always fully understood what panel is or what it is for, so we have devised a guide to help them understand the process. There is a guide for children and a guide for young people.

Our children have said they did not like the word 'permanence' as this made them feel that they could never return to their parents, if their parents made the changes needed for them to go home. To respond to this, our permanence panel will be known as Lasting Home Panel, which is a name chosen by our children.

Our children have told us that they cannot understand why it takes so long to secure permanence, so we have streamlined the process to make it easier to access and progress. We have emphasised that recommendations for permanence are based on assessed need and matching, not on the length of time already spent living in the home.

Our children have been clear that they do not want a panel made up of strangers, so we have given them the opportunity to identify and bring along with them those who they would like to be part of their Lasting Home Panel. Children have said that they want the

"big bosses" who make the decision as the Panel Chair, and they would like to choose who else attends along with them. This could include teachers, Independent Reviewing Officers, or health professionals. The list is endless and will be determined by our children.

Our children shared with us that they wanted professionals who were important to them to be part of the process, rather than the panel itself, so we have refocused the child's matching meeting to be a forum that is multi-agency and one that will produce paperwork that will make the recommendation to the Lasting Home Panel.

Some children were not sure what happened after panel, so the panel Chair will now send a personalised card to each young person who has attended panel, explaining the outcome.

Our children told us that the celebration event following panel was important to them, so there is more focus on this in the new process.

Membership and Governance

The matching meeting will serve as the multi-agency decision making forum in which joint corporate parenting recommendations to panel will be made, this is chaired by the children's social work Team Manager. Matching meetings need to ensure the inclusion of partners from Health and Education and any other core agency supporting the child, and will seek to replace the previous partnership element of permanence panel. The matching meeting will also ensure the views of birth family are captured.

In the Permanence Service, Lasting Home Panels will be monthly, dates agreed 12 months in advance. There will be one central panel, which will be made up of the three Senior Managers in the Children in Our Care Service. The panel chair will change between Senior Managers to reflect which Division the child is from.

In the Children with Disabilities Service, Lasting Home Panels will be held at a frequency determined by demand (not more than once per month). The Lasting Home Panel will be chaired by the Senior Manager within this service.

Other services within Children's Social Care may also ratify children's homes as Lasting Homes on occasion, for example Duty and Assessment, Complex Safeguarding, or Family Safeguarding. It is anticipated that this will be low numbers of children and young people, therefore the Lasting Home Panels will be arranged on an ad hoc basis, as required, to be chaired by the relevant Senior Manager.

To support participation, Lasting Home Panels will be made up of the people who are important to our children, presenting a different balance of professional and partnership inclusion.

The Head of Service will be provided with all documentation to enable them to provide their approval prior to panel sitting. This will enable oversight from the Head of Service prior to any ratification of children's placements and avoid any delay being experienced.

Our child or young person, their carer, their Allocated Social Worker, and their Independent Reviewing Officer will be invited to attend as standard. Our child can decide if they wish for anyone else to attend.

Foster Carers are expected to attend the Lasting Home Panel and present a 'letter of commitment'. They will be supported to prepare this by their Supervising Social Worker.

Our children and young people should be supported to attend their Lasting Home Panel where appropriate. Where our children do not want to attend, they will participate in their panel via alternative means, such as writing a letter to panel or drawing a picture.

In situations where our children do not attend in person, either their photo, an avatar, or an image which they chose to represent them will be presented during panel.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Children in Our Care Service

Role of Panel Administration

The Lasting Home Panel process is administrated and managed by Business Support. A nominated Panel Administrator is required to act as the custodian of the agenda and booking system, ensure room bookings (virtual and/or physical), and a celebration certificate.

The Panel Administrator will be responsible for ensuring panel dates are set in advance.

The Panel Administrator is responsible for the agenda and will only agree to a young person's booking upon receipt of the matching meeting minutes. The Panel Administrator will need to liaise closely with the Allocated Social Worker for the child to determine time slot for panel (e.g if the child wishes to attend, they will require an after-school time slot).

The Panel Administrator will confirm the agenda one month in advance of Lasting Home Panel and will be responsible for collating and distributing the panel documents to those in attendance.

The Role of the Social Worker

The role of the Allocated Social Worker is to ensure appropriate preparation is completed for panel in a timely way. Matching meeting minutes should be completed prior to the date and time of panel being agreed. This document will serve as the professional submission to panel.

The Allocated Social Worker is expected to support participation of our children, either in person, or via alternative means. To achieve this, the Allocated Social Worker, through direct work, will need to ensure the young person understands the purpose and role of their Lasting Home Panel in supporting their home becoming their lasting home. The Allocated Social Worker will need to spend time carefully preparing the young person for panel. They will need support with considering who they would like to attend their panel, how they want to be part of their panel and what their celebration event should look like.

The Role of Panel Members

Panel members should consider papers submitted in advance of panel from the multi-agency matching meeting.

There is a role for challenge if panel is concerned regarding the corporate parenting partnership recommendation, the level of commitment from carers or stability of the home.

The Chair of the Lasting Home Panel will be responsible for sending a personalised card to all children and young people attending panel celebrating the outcome of decisions.

A record of panel outcomes will be clearly recorded on the child's file by the Senior Manager Chair, using the template guide to ensure consistency across the service.

The Role of Children's Social Work Team Manager

The Team Manager from the Children's Social Work Team will be responsible for chairing and recording the matching meeting, in conjunction with the Allocated Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker and core partners.

The Team Manager is also responsible for updating the permanence tracker following the matching meeting and lasting home panel.

Useful links and information

Lancashire Permanence Policy

https://www.proceduresonline.com/lancashirecsc/files/permanence_policy.pdf?zoom_highlight=permanence+policy#search=%22permanence%20policy%22

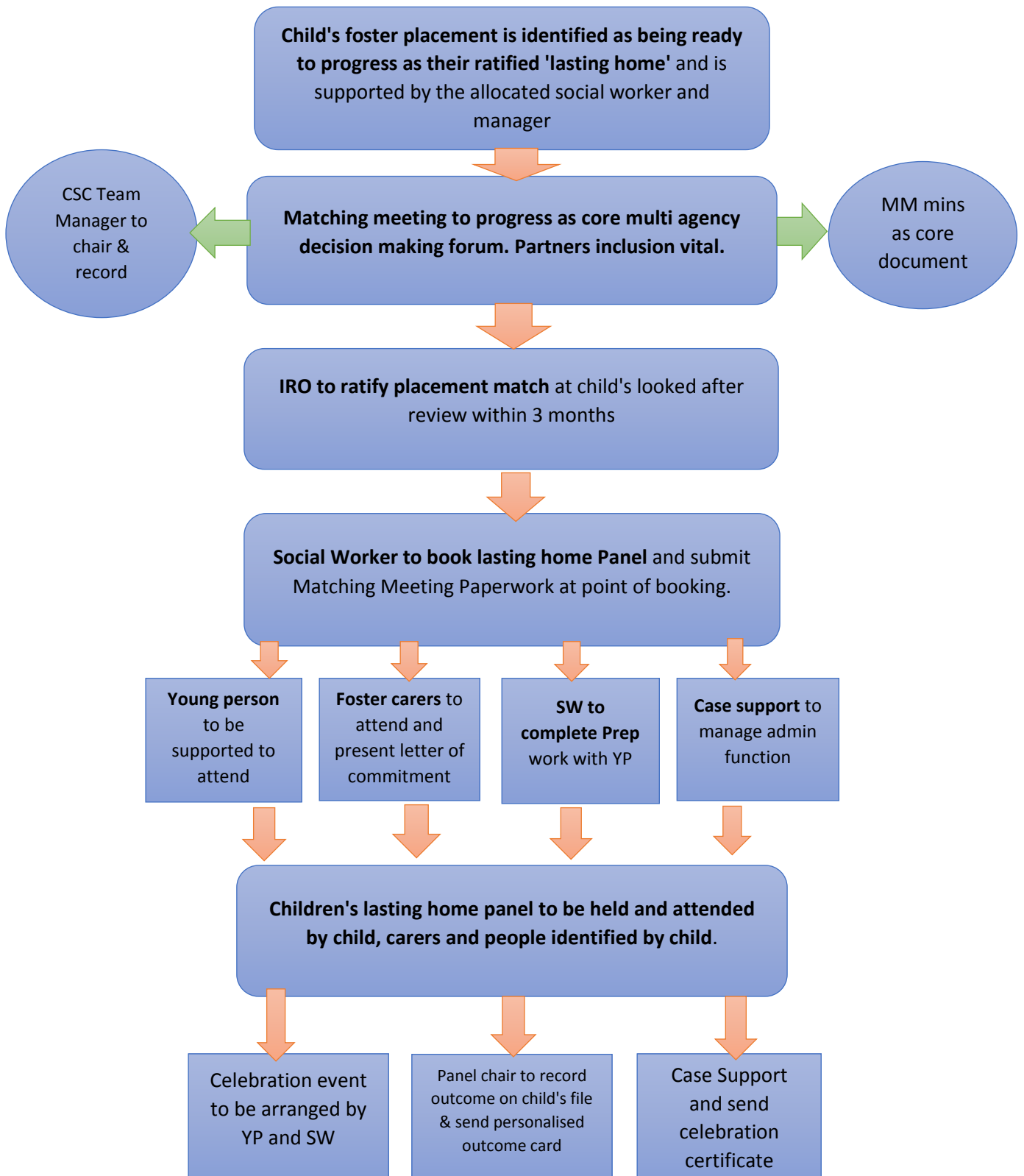


partner reporting
prompts for panel.doc

LANCASHIRE CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE

PERMANENCE SERVICE

LASTING HOME PANEL PROCESS



Lasting Home Panel



We hope you will come to the panel yourself, but if you don't want to, or feel worried about this – that's your choice. your social worker will talk with you about whether you want to come in person, or write a letter, or poem or send a picture. It's your panel and we want you to do whatever you feel happy with.

After panel if all goes well there will be a celebration! The big bosses will ask you how you want to celebrate your lasting home and your social worker will have worked through some exciting ideas before the panel.

You will have your celebration and be given a certificate to celebrate your lasting home.

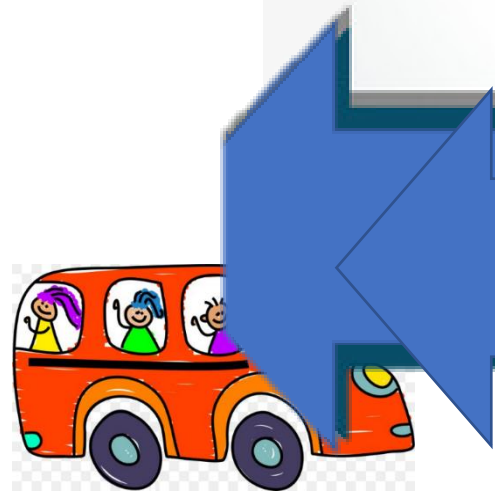


You and your carers are the most important people to come to the panel. You can bring others with you if you like. Your social worker can come, your IRO can come and any other people who you think should be there.

Your social worker will talk with you about the panel. A panel sounds scary, it's just a meeting. The big bosses will be there, and we would really like you to come and tell us why you think your foster home should become your lasting home.

If this meeting says we should go to lasting home panel, your social worker will book a panel slot for you.

Your matching meeting will take place to discuss whether your foster home should become your lasting home. Your views, your birth parents and carers views and the adults who you have told us are important are all key to this meeting.



Discussions between you, your social worker, and independent reviewing officer will start about whether to make your foster home your lasting home.

Your social worker will visit you and share this road map to help you understand the lasting home panel process

Your social worker will help you make sense of any worries you may have about what this means for your birth family or future care plan.

You will help your social worker understand who the most important people are in your life and these people will be invited to your 'matching meeting'. You don't have to attend this, but you can if you like

Lasting home panel – Teens guide

1

We hope that your lasting home should be there for you until your ready to leave home.



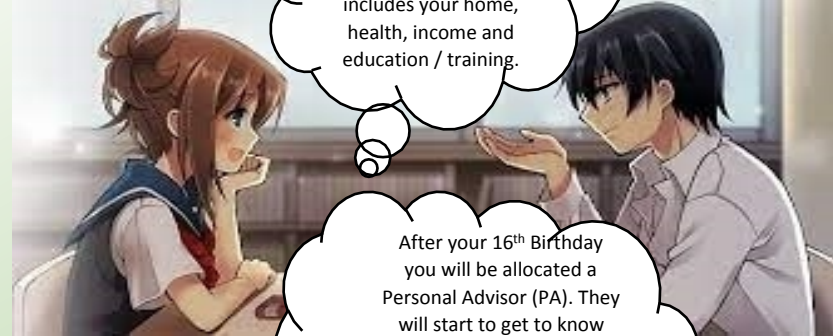
2

As you approach your 16th birthday, your social worker should start to talk to you about your needs assessment and pathway plan.



3

This is the plan which helps you become more independent. Your pathway plan has 4 keys areas, with includes your home, health, income and education / training.



After your 16th Birthday you will be allocated a Personal Advisor (PA). They will start to get to know you at this point and will be there to support you when you are an adult and your children's social worker has said goodbye.

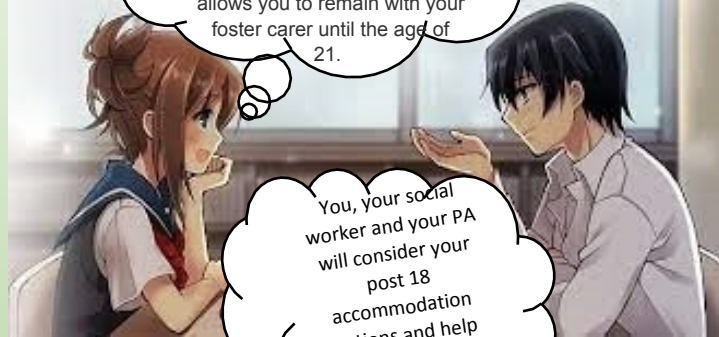
4

Becoming older does not mean you will automatically need to leave home. There are lots of options which can be considered. Some children will want to leave home, others will want to stay put.



5

Staying put is something which you may have heard of. Young people in foster care are encouraged to 'Stay Put' with their carers when they turn 18. This arrangement allows you to remain with your foster carer until the age of 21.



6

You, your social worker and your PA will consider your post 18 accommodation options and help you plan what's best for you!

7



8

There are lots of different options for you. Check out our Local Offer

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/youthzone/care-leavers-local-offer/accommodation/>





‘Lasting Home’

Permanence Panel re design

Presentation to the Corporate Parenting Board.

PROJECT AIM: EVALUATE THE CURRENT PERMANENCE PANEL.

- INITIAL SCOPING
- COMING TOGETHER
- PLANNING
- EXTERNAL & PARTICIPATION SCOPING
- DESIGN (AND REDESIGN).....

Organisation							
Aim	Action needed	Additional	Person responsible	By when	Progress	30.04.21	05.05.21
Initial Internal scoping	to consider core aims, what's good / not good / what we want to keep / what we need to know?		TH / AS / DB	First meeting	19.04.21		
Wider internal scoping	Each lead to link with managers within their division to understand what they have found positive / negative / aims for Panel to be		TH / AS / DB	19.4.21.			
Reviewing and adjusting	Further internal scoping following partner and internal contributions	Revisit initial docs.	TH/DB	7.5.21.			
Role of Business support	Role to be clarified – how they can support / limitation to support	5.5.21 - DB to share our aspirations and ask if they can met need?	DB	7.5.21			

Partnerships							
Aim	Action needed	Additional	Person responsible	By when	progress		
Identify Partners	We need to know who needs to be involved in process – Dawn to take forward invites to relevant agencies	Health. Education (VS) Fostering Residential IRO Children	DB	19.4.21			
Engaging with partners	Partners to be sent list of key areas of consideration in		DB	19.4.21			



OUR JOURNEY OF CONSULTATION

OUR CHILDREN STATED;

SOME CHILDREN **HAVEN'T HAD ANY INVOLVEMENT IN PANEL** AND DIDN'T REALLY **UNDERSTAND** WHAT IT WAS FOR OR ABOUT. THIS WAS MAINLY CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN **IN THEIR HOMES FOR MANY YEARS.**

SOME CHILDREN ASKED WHY IT ONLY HAPPENED **SO LATE** WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN IN THEIR HOMES A LONG TIME.

SOME CHILDREN WERE TOLD THEIR CURRENT HOME WAS THEIR FOREVER HOME BY THEIR PREVIOUS SOCIAL WORKERS SO THEY FOUND THE PROSPECT OF **PANEL CONFUSING.**

SOME CHILDREN DIDN'T LIKE THE **WORD PERMANENCE** AS THIS MADE THEM FEEL THAT THEY COULD NEVER RETURN TO PARENTS IF THEIR PARENTS MADE THE CHANGES THEY NEEDED TO FOR THEM TO GO HOME.

THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN WOULD LIKE PROFESSIONALS AT PANEL WHO WERE **PERSONAL TO THEM** EG, TEACHERS, IRO, CLA NURSE AND SOME WANTED FAMILY MEMBERS.

SOME CHILDREN ENJOYED WRITING LETTERS TO PANEL, DOING VIDEOS AND DIRECT WORK BUT **DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER** THAT. THEY WOULD LIKE SOMETHING FROM THE PANEL TO GIVE THEM **THE DECISION** RATHER THAN THIS COME FROM THEIR SOCIAL WORKER.

CHILDREN WOULD **LIKE CELEBRATION EVENTS** AFTER PANEL AND FOR CSC TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS- ONE CHILD WANTED THE BIG MANAGER (GINA) TO TAKE THEM TO BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH AND CELEBRATE WITH THEM!



...CONTINUED

- OUR PARTNERS STATED;
- MATCHING MEETINGS ARE UNDER UTILISED – THIS WAS FELT TO BE AN IMPORTANT PROCESS AND DOCUMENT IN TERMS OF CAPTURING THE MATCHING PROCESS.
- THERE HAS BEEN A LACK OF CHILDREN’S INVOLVEMENT.
- THE SET UP OF PANEL DIDN’T FEEL CHILD FOCUSED, WITH PEOPLE PERSONAL AND RELEVANT TO INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN NOT BEING INCLUDED.
- THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON PERMANENCE AND RATIFYING HOMES AS PERMANENT.
- WE COULD ASK FOR MORE PARTICIPATION FROM FOSTER CARERS.
- THERE WAS CONFUSION AMONGST PARTNERS REGARDING THEIR ROLES (EDUCATION AND HEALTH) AND WHETHER THEY PROVIDED THE CORRECT AND RELEVANT INFORMATION.



...CONTINUED

- OUR TEAMS STATED;
- THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE IS THAT OUR CHILDREN SHOULD BE INVOLVED MORE.
- THE PART OF PERMANENCE PANEL THAT WORKS WELL IS RATIFYING CHILDREN'S HOMES AS PERMANENT.
- IT IS IMPORTANT THE CELEBRATION EVENT AND CERTIFICATE ARE PROVIDED.
- THE PAPER WORK AND ORGANISATION SIDE OF THE PANEL HAVE BEEN BARRIERS.
- YOU WANT THE ROLE OF PANEL MEMBERS AND PARTNERS TO BE CLEAR.
- CARE PLANNING DISCUSSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS AROUND PEPS SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE AT PANEL.

WE
LISTENED....

WE
RESPONDED

...

.....& GOT A
BIT
RADICAL....



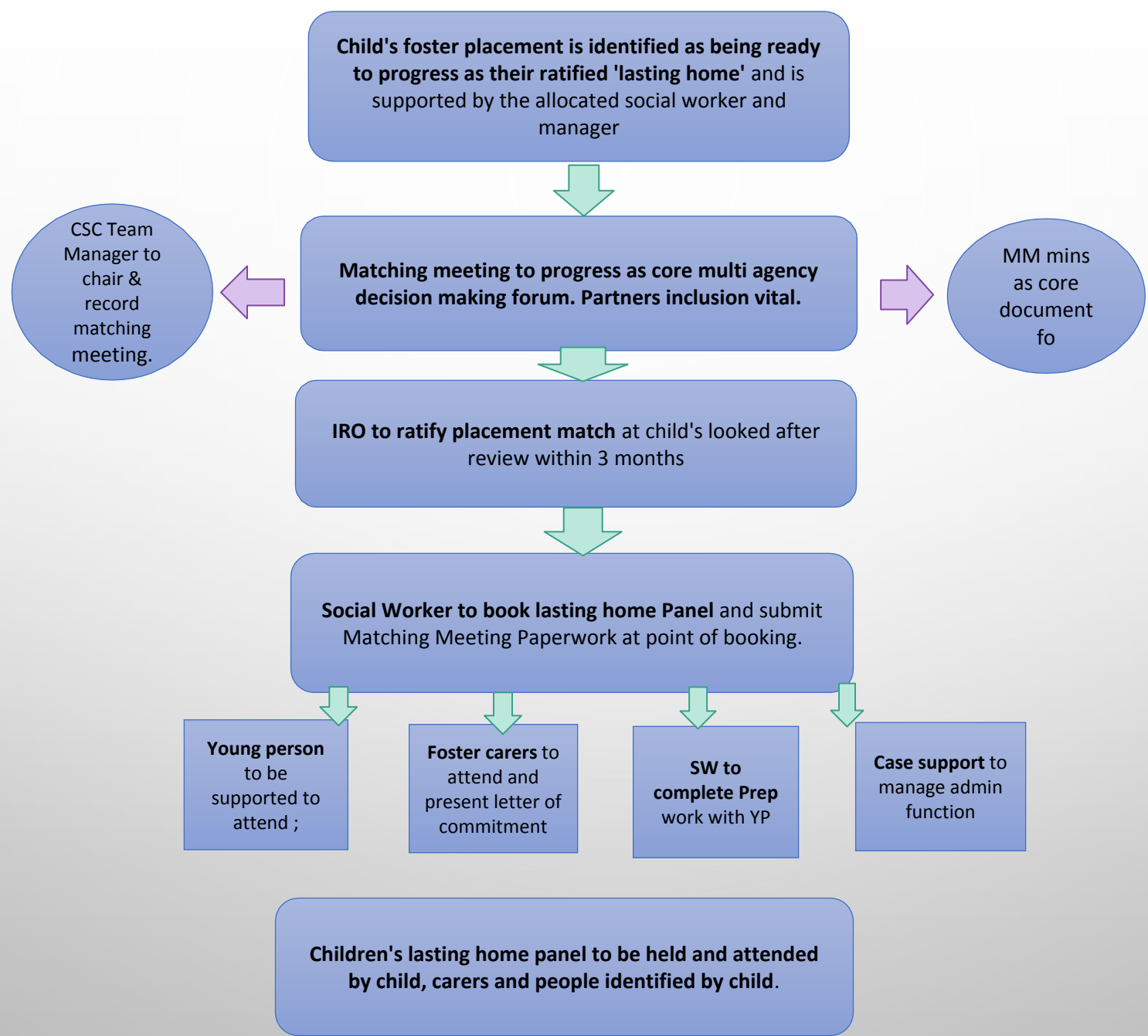
'LASTING HOME' - PANEL REDESIGN

- NAMED BY OUR CHILDREN.
- ONLY DEAL WITH PERMANENCE RATIFICATION.
- CHILD WILL BE CENTRAL TO PANEL AND 'ATTENDANCE AS NORM', REFRAMING FROM PROFESSIONAL PANEL TO CHILD'S MEETING.
- ATTENDED BY PEOPLE WHO MATTER WITH MEANINGFUL ROLE.
- PLATFORM OF COMMITMENT FROM FOSTER CARERS.
- CELEBRATE PERSONALLY AND HOWEVER AND WITH WHOEVER OUR CHILDREN WANT!



A word cloud featuring various terms related to care and permanence. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'Lancashire' and 'Permanence Service' being the largest and most prominent. Other words include 'Relationships', 'Family', 'Loyalty', 'Care', 'Goals', 'Together', 'Potential', 'Health', 'Equality', 'Opportunity', 'Home', 'Love', 'Commitment', 'Fairness', 'Fun', 'Confidence', 'Recognition', 'Belonging', 'Trust', 'Honesty', 'Hope', 'Stability', 'Dreams', and 'Ambition'. The words are in various colors and orientations, creating a dynamic and colorful composition.

LASTING HOME PANEL PROCESS



Lasting Home Panel

Children's guide



We hope you will come to the panel yourself, but if you don't want to, or feel worried about this – that's your choice. Your social worker will talk with you about whether you want to come in person, or write a letter, or poem or send a picture. It's your panel and we want you to do whatever you feel happy with.

After panel, if all goes well there will be a celebration! The big boxes will ask you how you want to celebrate your lasting home and your social worker will have worked through some exciting ideas before the panel.

You will have your celebration and be given a certificate to celebrate your lasting home.

You and your carers are the most important people to come to the panel. You can bring others with you if you like? Your social worker can come, your IRO can come and any other people who you think should be there.

Your social worker will talk with you about the panel. A panel sounds scary, it's just a meeting. The big boxes will be there and we would really like you to come and tell us why you think your foster placement should become your lasting home.

If this meeting says we should go to lasting home panel, your social worker will book a panel slot for you.

Your matching meeting will take place and discuss whether your foster placement is good enough to become your lasting home. Your views, your birth parents and carers views and the adults who you have told us are important are all key to this meeting.

Discussions between you, your social worker, and independent reviewing officer will start about whether to make your foster placement your lasting home.

Your social worker will visit you and share this road map to help you understand the lasting home panel process

Your social worker will help you make sense of any worries you may have about what this means for your birth family or future care plan.

You will help your social worker understand who the most important people are in your life and these people will be invited to your 'matching meeting'. You don't have to attend this, but you can if you



LASTING HOME PANEL – TEENS GUIDE

1

We hope that your lasting home should be there for you until you're ready to leave home.



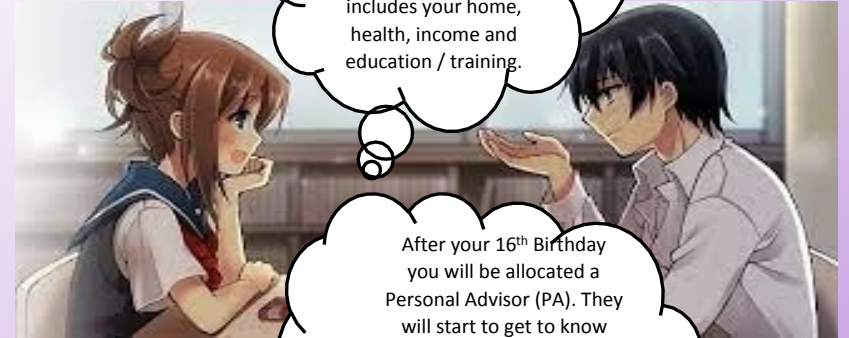
2

As you approach your 16th birthday, your social worker should start to talk to you about your needs assessment and pathway plan.



3

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7





THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

- Guidance docs to support sharing of meaningful information.
- Minute guides
- Celebration certificates.
- Commitment letters.

Partnership guidance & tools

Practitioner Tools - Flow Chart & children's guide.

- Helps practitioners explain process and provides visual of steps
- Supports meaningful participation.

Full Process

Outline Process

- Document which explains in purpose aims and reasoning and fuller expectations of all participants in process

- Provides a quick guide and breakdown for partners to follow

FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS?



Lancashire County Council

Life Story Work Procedure

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What is Life Story Work?
3. When do you begin Life Story Work?
4. Who needs Life Story Work?
5. Life Story Work with the child or young person
6. Life Story Books
7. Later in Life Letters
8. Who does Life Story Work?
9. Therapeutic Life Story Work
10. Timescales
11. Oversight, Recording and Quality Assurance
12. Changes of Social Worker
13. Access to Records
14. Outcomes for our children and young people

1. Introduction

Lancashire County Council is committed to promoting the resilience and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people who are Looked After. Life Story Work forms an integral role in mapping out the life journey for a child, including significant events, relationship networks, and achievements that have occurred in their life. This procedure and its guidance set out the minimum standard of practice for all children and young people who do not live at home with their birth families.

Our legal responsibility as set out in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 is to ensure that children and young people are at the heart of any process that affects their lives, and their active involvement is sought in this work, based on their developmental stage and understanding.

Lancashire's core values set out the importance of effective participation, which includes listening to the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people. This is most crucial when progressing their personal Life Story Work. This is achieved by giving the child or young person ownership of the Life Story Work and encouraging them to participate as much as possible. Through this process of involvement, their sense of identity is established, which in turn promotes their sense of resilience and self-esteem, and equips them for a healthier future.

2. What is Life Story work?

Most Looked After children have had profound experiences of loss, separation, abuse or neglect, and changes of home and carers. Life Story Work is the process of helping children separated from their birth families to remember and make sense of their lives and decisions made. Life Story Work can help children to accept and integrate their past, make sense of their present, and develop a clear sense of identity for their future. It is an invaluable tool in helping to understand what has happened and is happening to them.

The process can purposefully assist a child to answer the questions:

- Who am I?
- How did I get here and who are my networks of support from the past and present?
- Where am I going?
- Life Story Work can help identify strengths to achieving future goals.

(Michael Rutter, Resilience 1997)

There are three core elements to Life Story Work:

1. The creation of a story that explains the reasons for the child's moves from their birth family as well as a record of important people, events, memories, achievements, and facts.
2. The gathering of treasured objects from the past, which includes photographs and mementos of childhood.
3. On-going, regular, and consistent direct work with children and young people, providing information about their birth family and other significant relationships in their past and present life. This should be done through conversations with the child, including the use of direct work tools and resources where appropriate.

It is important to recognise that direct work is a process and should not be viewed as a product or a one-off event. A Life Story Book should not be focussed on at the expense of the other core elements.

It is essential to be able to assess and recognise what the right approach is for the child or young person at any given point in time. Different children and young people need different information at different times in their lives. Their needs for Life Story Work will evolve and change with their age, development, and sense of self.

3. When do you begin Life Story Work?

The gathering of information for Life Story Work should begin with children and young people as soon as there is a plan for them to become cared for by Lancashire County Council. It is essential that all professionals working with children and young people who are Looked After, recognise their responsibility for ensuring that they receive effective Life Story Work from the outset of being moved from the care of their birth parents.

The move of a child from their parent's care is the most important and significant event that can occur and is often the start of their journey as a Looked After child. It is essential that detailed and accurate records are kept, reflecting decision making about why a child has become Looked After, but also detailing key moments that the child would be likely to want to know about this event. It is important that memories are kept, and photographs are taken of significant events.

It is vital that children enter care with as many of their personal possessions as possible. Parents should be encouraged at this point to provide photos and any special items the child might value in their possession.

Children and young people through the process of this intervention must be given an explanation that is truthful, yet compassionate, and pitched at their level of developmental understanding. The explanation should be one that is agreed by all professionals and consistently used by those involved in the child or young person's care.

Growing up in a substitute family where it is okay to be open and curious about birth family is an important factor in positive outcomes for children. Research of outcomes for children shows us that there is a direct connection between children who are settled in a home and those with a direct explanation about why they are Looked After, Baynes, P. (2020) *Supporting life story work: the role of managers, IROs and strategic leads: Webinar*. Dartington: Research in Practice.

The child or young person's allocated social worker should ensure that their care plan reflects the child's views about why they are Looked After and include details about how this affects their identity needs and impacts on their well-being as well as what current support is required regarding their Life Story.

Life Story Work is an integral part of working with Looked After children and should not be a separate process that is progressed when time permits. The progression of Life Story Work should be closely monitored by the multi-agency group through multi-agency meetings, by the Independent Reviewing Officer and by the Team Manager.

Some children with disabilities become Looked After due to them receiving short breaks but they remain primarily in the care of their parents who continue to exercise full parental responsibility for them, even when accessing their short break. These children may not require the same level of Life Story Work that other Looked After children require, however, it is important that they are supported to understand why they have become Looked After and to understand their care plan.

4. Who needs Life Story Work?

All children who become Looked After need Life Story Work.

- Children living with foster carers including connected carers
- Children and young people living with independent fostering agencies
- Children living in residential homes
- Children living in supported or semi-independent accommodation
- Children placed for adoption
- Children who become looked after through receiving short breaks
- Children on Care Orders placed at home – these children should still have Life Story Work however it must be noted that the child's experiences and needs should be reflected in how this is approached. Some of these children may never have been separated from their birth family and therefore whilst they still need support to understand the Local Authority's intervention with them and their family, they are not likely to require the same extent of support in understanding their life story. Tailoring support to need is essential.

For children who are adopted, the Life Story book will usually be handed to the adoptive parents in advance of the final adoption hearing. The contents of the book should be agreed with the adoptive parents.

5. Life Story Work with the child or young person

It is essential to recognise that effective Life Story Work will only be possible if those supporting the child or young person have developed close and meaningful relationships with them. Building trusting relationships with children and young people through spending time with them, playing, talking, drawing, and having fun is a fundamental part of relationship building and will provide the necessary foundation for sensitive and painful conversations about a child's life story.

For children and young people who can understand, Life Story Work should be done with them. For babies, this should be done for them by way of a life story book, until they are able to be involved in this. For children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities a creative and individualised approach should be taken. It is important to know the child or young person and understand their ways of communication and their learning needs. It should begin with trying to establish what they know and how they feel. Some children and young people will have a clear view of what happened to them but may not know why. Others will be very confused or angry. Some may still be grieving; recognising that separation and loss can take a long time to heal, their sadness must be acknowledged and not suppressed.

A child who does not wish to talk about their past still needs the same level of explanation at the appropriate time in their life about what happened, and to be informed about their plans for their present and future on an on-going basis. In these situations, the opportunity should be taken whenever there is the potential, to listen to and/or share their views, wishes and feelings.

Children need clear, honest explanations about their Life Story. Answers to questions should be carefully and sensitively delivered. Language should be jargon free and presented in a way the child or young person will be able to understand. It is important that children know what happened to them and why certain decisions were made, but also what support their parents and extended family were given.

It is essential to be aware that because something has been explained once to a child, this does not mean the child has understood or taken the explanation on board. Some things can be too painful to hear, and children may not be able to process the information they have been given. There can be significant challenges in conveying information that a child does not want to hear. Therefore, whilst respecting the child's boundaries and promoting a child led journey, it is important to promote persistence through re-visiting stories and checking what and how information has been received. Professionals must ask '*Where are they at now?... How do we need to update this story?... What is needed next?*'

The Life Story Book is part of the process and is a tool to help the child make sense of what has happened to them and what is happening. The Life Story Work and book should include the active contribution of the child's input, of the way they viewed their past, present and their hopes for the future. The person leading the work should offer the child or young person a safe, supportive environment to sensitively explore their feelings of the past and what will happen next. For children with special education needs and/or disabilities the Life Story Book may need to take a different form.

The use of a range of creative and abstract approaches, direct work tools and resources, along with story-telling techniques, genograms and life mapping can facilitate the process.

It is not unusual for children to seek out consistent explanations of what happened to them on a regular basis. This is part of their healing process of coming to terms with not returning to their birth family. It is also part of child development for children to ask questions and be curious.

6. Life Story Books

A Life Story Book is an account of a Looked After child's life in words, pictures and documents that enables a child to explore and understand their history before and during being a Looked After child. Each book is bespoke and should be written according to the level of understanding of the child or young person. The book should be personalised, so whilst templates are available, these should be adapted and used as an example only. Life Story Work activities and direct work undertaken should be included in the book to support their ownership of this. When a child or young person first becomes Looked After, their allocated Social Worker, regardless of which function they work in, is responsible for starting their Life Story Book.

A Life Story Book should:

- Keep as full of a chronological record as possible of a child's life;
- Integrate the past into the future so that childhood makes sense;
- Provide a basis on which a continuing Life Story can be added to;
- Be something the child can return to when he/she needs to deal with old feelings and clarify and/or accept the past;
- Increase a child's sense of self and self-worth;
- Provide a structure for talking to children about painful issues;
- Be jargon free using clear language that cares

The allocated Social Worker for the child or young person is responsible for writing the book. Time and care should be given to planning how to undertake the work. This requires the Social Worker to:

- Read information about the child or young person carefully and thoroughly
- Collate information in chronological order
- Note reasons for decisions
- Note gaps in the records and attempt to fill them
- Involve children, parents, friends, relatives and carers etc. as necessary
- Photos of birth family should be included, but beware of making the book a photo album. A separate album can be created to include photos from family time and of birth family.
- The book should be completed electronically, using Word, PowerPoint or Publisher, and saved electronically in an agreed, accessible file.
- The book should be printed for the child, in colour, with attention paid to how it is formatted and overall presentation. The book should continue to be updated and added to as the child grows up.
- Carers should safely store the Life Story Book as a hard copy (*where the child can access it, and also as an electronic version*).
- Children who have a plan of adoption should receive their Life Story Book at the point the Adoption Order is made.
- Children who are to remain Looked After should receive a hard copy of their first Life Story Book upon finalisation of their care proceedings. This includes for those children and young people whose care plan is one of Special Guardianship Order. Children who have a plan to remain in the care of the Local Authority who have not been subject to Care Proceedings should be provided with a Life Story Book at the point at which it has been determined they need to continue to be Looked After. This is a crucial time in the child or young person's life, where the decision making of the court/Local Authority should have been appropriately shared with the child or young person and their carers.

Providing the Life Story Book at this point should support the child or young person to process events leading to this point and assist the carers to confidently continue with the Life Story Work undertaken, using the book as a tool. The Social Worker should add to the electronic version of the book periodically, using direct work with the child or young person to do so, and consider appropriate future points to provide the new sections to the child or young person. Children and young people should be given their Life Story Book directly, 'in person' by their Social Worker and they should have the opportunity to look through their Life Story Book with their Social Worker and carer present to support them.

For children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, their Life Story Book may need to take another form. There are many different examples of this, such as talking books, craft projects, braille books, games, jigsaw puzzles. The format of the "book" should be one that is accessible to the child or young person depending on their development needs and level of understanding. For some children with profound disabilities a Life Story Book might not be appropriate at all. In these circumstances the Allocated Social Worker should discuss this with their Team Manager in supervision.

7. Later Life Letters

Later Life Letters are written by the child's Social Worker to a child or young person, with the aim of helping them to understand their past, increase their self-esteem and strengthen their resilience. The letter is in addition to the Life Story Book and should not be a substitute for the book, unless it is deemed to be more appropriate than a book, which may be the case for young people who became Looked After in their later teenage years.

A Later Life Letter can be used to help explain why the child or young person was removed from the care of their parents, and subsequent decision making and events. The child or young person is the focus of the letter and it must be remembered when writing the letter that they need to know why they were not able to return to their parent's care.

A key difference between the Later Life Letter and the Life Story Book lies in the depth of the detail being shared. Thus, more detailed sensitive information should be included in the Later Life Letter as the letter will be shared with the child at a later age when they are emotionally able to understand and deal with the information.

In addition to the one provided by the social worker, Later Life letters can also be written to children by significant people in their life, explaining their relationship and their memories and experiences with the child. For example:

- From a carer when a child is moving on
- From a Social Worker when their role is ending
- From other key professionals in a child's life such as Guardians, Family Support Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

Young people should not be sent their Later Life Letter, or any documents relating to their Life Story, or to their files and records, in the post. All information should be given 'in person' and support offered to the young person to read through their letter or information and ask questions with their Social Worker or Personal Advisor present. If the young person chooses not to read their letter with the worker present this is their choice, but this support must be offered as a minimum.

Later Life Letters should be provided for our all children and young people, unless to do so would not be meaningful, for example, if a young person has significant learning disabilities and would not be able to understand their letter.

8. Who does Life Story Work?

It is the responsibility of the child or young person's Social Worker to undertake Life Story Work. Life Story Work for children or young people who are Looked After is a core Social Work task and central to the role of the allocated Social Worker. Social Workers form the bridge between the decision making that has occurred for a child or young person and their actual life. Children and young people will often identify Life Story Work as being one of the main things they believe Social Workers are there for.

On rare occasions there may be compelling reasons why painful past issues are not dealt with by the child's Social Worker and in those situations/occasionally it may be desirable to involve an independent person to support the child; someone who the child does not associate with responsibility for removing them from their birth family and home. It is the judgement of the Children's Team Manager whether some elements of the work or story are delegated to a skilled Family Support Worker, foster carer or residential worker who is well known to the child and has regular contact with them. If Life Story Work is undertaken by a Family Support Worker, foster carer or residential carer this should be closely supervised by the child's Social Worker and their Line Manager to monitor its suitability.

The role of the child's Social Worker in Life Story Work is to:

- Gather full and accurate information on the child or young person's history and reasons for being in care
- Develop an on-going chronology of significant events, significant relationships with family and friends, moves of homes and schools in the child or young person's life
- Record all decisions made on behalf of the child or young person about their future. Children's Guardians could be approached to write a letter to the child or young person to explain their role, events and decisions made in the court arena
- Record the child or young person's views wishes and feelings about the plans and decisions made or endorsed at their reviews
- Record important events, milestones, achievements and details a child or young person might like to know about their younger selves
- Collect photographs, certificates and documents to support the Life Story Work
- Ensure that the child or young person's carers have a memory box, containing childhood mementos, photographs and treasured objects for safe keeping. The Social Worker must have seen this
- Ensure the child or young person's contribution is included as far as it is practicable in the gathering of information, based on their developmental understanding
- Where there are gaps in important information make it clear to the child or young person that the information is not fact and cannot be confirmed. Record this uncertainty clearly within the child's file

It is crucial that everyone in the child or young person's life provides the same explanation to them as to why they are Looked After. Clear and consistent information from their whole network will reduce the likelihood for a child or young person to feel confused or worried about their history or identity.

Foster and residential carers do not have access to, or responsibility for, the child's history before living with them and are reliant on the Social Worker for their contribution of an accurate chronology of events, and support during the process. Carers should be supported to provide the child with their own visual record of the time spent with them and contribute to the child's life journey and story wherever possible.

It is important to involve the child's birth family in Life Story Work. Agreeing an appropriate but honest narrative with birth parents about why their child became Looked After can be incredibly useful in supporting a child or young person to hear one consistent story. Family members such as grandparents often have knowledge and information that is not known to others, which could provide a child or young person with key information about their history or that of their parents or brothers and sisters. Likewise, there are likely to be key professionals such as teachers or midwives who through their involvement hold important information about a child's life story.

Independent Reviewing Officers should review the progress of Life Story Work and its impact on the child or young person. Child Looked After Reviews should record specific detail about these enquiries. Independent Reviewing Officers should be sent an electronic copy of the Life Story Book, or evidence of work if this is not in book form, one week prior to the Review. Updates on the progress and impact of on-going Life Story Work should be detailed within the review report.

DRAFT

9. Therapeutic Life Story Work

Therapeutic Life Story Work is more specialised work for children and young people who have suffered significant trauma, are struggling emotionally, and are confused, angry and distressed. Therapeutic Life Story Work could be considered for children and young people who are preoccupied by their past and where this is getting in the way of everyday life.

Therapeutic Life Story Work can only be undertaken by someone with a specific professional qualification/diploma in Therapeutic Life Story Work. Recommendations for Therapeutic Life Story Work should only be made based on an updated assessment of the child's needs. Following this, a discussion should take place with the Team Manager, if the Social Worker and multi-agency network considers this support to be necessary for a child or young person. Therapeutic Life Story Work can then be commissioned for individual children and young people if required.

DRAFT

10. Timescales

There are no set timescales for completing Life Story Work because it is an on-going process whilst the child/young person is Looked After. A Life Story Book should be started as soon as a child becomes Looked After.

The gathering of information for a child's life story should commence once accommodation is being considered as an option, and Life Story Work should commence at the outset of a child or young person becoming Looked After, with the first Child Looked After Review clearly recording what Life Story Work has begun. In preparation for the first Looked After Review meeting the Social Worker should ensure there is:

1. A clear recording of the narrative provided to the child or young person regarding why they have become Looked After—the case file should record who discussed this with them, when and what exactly was said.
2. Details recorded on file of which possessions the child or young person had with them when they were moved from their parent's care.
3. Confirmation the child's carer has been provided with key information about their history and why they became Looked After.
4. Confirmation the child's carer has a memory box for the child and will begin collecting and saving important items for the child which they will ensure go with the child if they ever move on from their care.

11. Oversight, recording and Quality Assurance

There is an important role for the Independent Reviewing Officer in ensuring this work is progressed continuously and considered as part of the child or young person's statutory reviews. This should form part of their advocating role for the child or young person's identity and lifelong needs. The child or young person's involvement in the process should also be considered.

The multi-agency group should ensure that all relevant professionals and carers are clear about the nature and purpose of the work being undertaken and ensure a common explanation is shared by all in order that consistent messages are given to the child or young person involved. The multi-agency group should monitor the progress of Life Story Work and share relevant information to enable appropriate and consistent support throughout the process.

The allocated Social Worker's Line Manager should ensure that Life Story Work and the impact of this on the child or young person is regularly reflected upon in supervision with them. The Line Manager should quality assure Life Story Books and Later Life Letters to ensure these have been produced to a satisfactory standard.

Case file audits should be undertaken periodically to quality assure the areas of the child or young person's file that can evidence effective progression of Life Story Work. Life Story Work should be reflected in the following areas of a child's file:

- The child or young person's care plan, reflecting their current needs regarding Life Story Work
- The child or young person's case summary where it should clearly reflect why the child is Looked After and what the child understands in respect of this
- The child or young person's most recent C&F assessment should detail their identify needs specifically in relation to being Looked After. There should be detail about why the child thinks they are Looked After, the impact of this on their emotional well-being and sense of self, how well they understand their life story and what impact Life Story Work has had on them.

In addition to the above, Child Looked After reviews should reflect the allocated Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer's, child or young person, carers and parents' views in regard to the progress of Life Story Work and its impact and whether a child or young person has received a hard copy of their Life Story Book.

Supervision between the allocated Social Worker and their line manager should regularly refer to the progress of Life Story Work.

Statutory visits and direct work recordings should often evidence that Life Story Work is taking place with children and young people.

12. Changes of Social Worker

When a transfer occurs between Social Workers, which often means a change of team too, a transfer summary should be completed which explicitly includes the nature, purpose and stage of the Life Story Work.

It is crucial that the transfer of case management responsibility between Social Workers is undertaken thoughtfully, with good communication between the current and prospective Social Worker, and with due consideration to the plan for Life Story Work.

The electronic version of the Life Story book should be up to date at the point of transfer and handed over.

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13. Access to Records

Children and young people have a right to access the information that we hold about them, this includes their Children's Social Care records. Adults can request their records at any time. There is no minimum age for a records access request from a child, instead the Social Worker or Local Authority should make a judgment about whether the child understands the nature of their request, and if appropriate, their parent or carer should confirm the child's understanding. No assumptions should be made about children's capacity or level of understanding; this should be assessed on an individual basis and information should be presented in a way the child can understand it.

We should routinely share information with our children, young people and their families, and provide written copies of assessments, care plans, reviews, and meetings. Documents should be written ready to be shared, using appropriate language that cares. If a child or young person wishes to view their full records they can put in a formal request. There is information on this process on the intranet and on the Local Offer web pages. It is important for Social Workers and Personal Advisors to advise their children and young people of this process and their rights, and to support them with accessing and reading their records, if they wish to do so.

For some of our young people, viewing their records with the support of the Social Worker could be much more beneficial and meaningful to them than completing a Life Story Book. Care must be taken to offer appropriate preparation and support to any of our children with accessing their records, as this could be overwhelming for them at times. Nether-the-less, it is essential that we do not shy away from difficult conversations.

14. Outcomes for our children and young people

To ensure Life Story Work is embedded as part of a core service delivery in respect of every child or young person in the care of Lancashire County Council.

The purpose and aim of Life Story Work is understood by all frontline practitioners delivering the service.

To effectively achieve a systematic approach and qualitative outcome of service delivery for every 'Looked After child' and care experienced young person in Lancashire.

Life Story Work - Quality Assurance Tool

This tool should be used as part of a reflective discussion between the Team Manager & Worker/Author responsible for the LSB/LLL while reviewing together the quality of the LSB/LLL that has been completed

Case ID:	Click here to enter text.	Date of QA:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Author of work/Social Worker:	Click here to enter text.	Team Manager conducting QA:	Click here to enter text.

Life Story Book or Later in Life Letter (Delete whichever is NOT applicable to this QA.)

<i>Provide an overview of the relationship that the author of the LSB/LLL has with the child. ie- how long have they know the child/their family, are they confident they know the child's story, what is the quality of the relationship between the child & worker/author, does the child meaningfully engage with the worker/author?</i>	Overview of quality of relationship:
<i>Is the language appropriate for the current developmental stage of the child? Consider the tone, is it sensitively but honestly written- has language that cares been used?</i>	Choose an item. Please state why:
<i>Does it give a detailed accurate account of the child's journey before, and into care, considering transitions through homes the child has lived within?</i>	Choose an item. Please state why:
<i>Does it provide a clear rationale for the decisions made-, when and why? (Including removal from birth parents/family, transitions through the child's various homes) Is Jargon avoided?</i>	Choose an item. Please state why:
<i>Has the child had any direct input into creating the LSB? Would it answer any specific queries they have?</i>	Choose an item. Please state why:
<i>Is there evidence that the child's birth family and current/previous carers have contributed with information? Do the carers and birth family agree with the narrative provided around the child's 'story'?</i>	Choose an item. Please state why:

<i>Are good quality photographs included, from birth to current age? Photos should be included of as many significant birth family members as possible without becoming a photo album.</i>	Choose an item.	Please state why:
<i>Is there a detailed birth family tree included, with DOB's and full names? Is a copy of the birth certificate included?</i>	Choose an item.	Please state why:
<i>Does the LSB/LLL capture key developmental milestones, birthdays, celebrations, and significant changes, such as school transitions. Highlighting positives and achievements for the CYP as well as challenging times.</i>	Choose an item.	Please state why:
<i>For children in lasting homes (ratified as permanent), is there relevant information about those carers/the child's home included and does it capture how their permanence decision was celebrated?</i>	Choose an item.	Please state why:
<i>How is the LSB presented- has care been taken to make this bespoke to the CYP, it is inviting and interesting to look at? Avoids long narratives and has been spell checked? Is there an electronic copy?</i>	Choose an item.	Please state why:

Recommended & Agreed Actions

**Is the Life Story Book/Later Life Letter ready to be shared with the child- if so when will this be done by the Social Worker and when/who will save on LCS?
If not- what work is still required and does the author require support to do this? Could this piece of work be used as a good practice example?**